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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes each of the new approaches in teacher preparation at Michigan State University. These approaches include 1) preparation for reading instruction; 2) internship program for elementary teachers; 3) cluster program in student teaching (clusters of students and a supervising teacher use the public school as a learning laboratory in which the student teachers study the problems of teaching and gain experience in solving these problems); 4) public school experiences for university faculty members; 5) follow-up program for beginning teachers; 6) overseas study opportunities in education for undergraduates; 7) competency-based course work on the tasks of teaching; 8) development of single concept films; 9) teacher preparation for inner-city schools; 10) classroom experience before admission to teacher education programs; 11) a post-student teaching experience for all undergraduates; 12) revised English Department Program for teachers of handicapped children. (MJM)

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NEW APPROACHES TO TEACHER PREPARATION AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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PREPARATION FOR READING INSTRUCTION AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

The College of Education at Michigan State University shares the sentiment expressed by the M.A.S.A. and other professional groups regarding the importance of the teaching of reading as a part of a preparation program for prospective teachers. The curriculum in teacher education now includes:

1. A pre-student teaching course in reading methodology is required of all MSU elementary education majors and is unique in three ways: it models the instructional principles we want elementary teachers to use, it is performance-based, and it offers numerous options for pursuing individual needs and interests.

   The modeling aspect of the course is essentially a matter of the teacher educator "practicing what he preaches." The major principles being modeled include instructor accountability, competency-based instruction, application of the principles of learning theory, and the development of humanistic relationships between instructor and student.

   The competency-based aspect of the course specifies 60 teaching behaviors needed by reading teachers and provides experience in which the student must actually perform each of these behaviors in simulated teaching situations. The emphasis is on demonstrated performance, student activity, and mastery of each objective as opposed to the traditional practice of listening to a lecture and completing a final examination. The bulk of the 60 objectives focuses on diagnosis, basic skill instruction, and organization and management of individualized instruction.

   Students are also provided with a number of optional activities, including workshops and field experiences, from which they can choose those which most suit their interests and career aspiration. All such options are practical in nature and emphasize the development of behaviors and materials needed to teach reading effectively.

2. An elective, post-student teaching course is offered for prospective elementary teachers to provide them with an opportunity to receive more help with problems identified during the student teaching experience. The course carries three credits and each student is required to complete a supervised clinical experience in teaching reading and to analyze and evaluate one commercial reading program. In addition, each student, with the advice of the instructor, designs additional instructional experiences for himself based on his needs and the available options. These options include independent library study, problem seminars, workshops, and service as assistant instructors and tutors for the pre-student teachers enrolled in the beginning reading course.

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The instructional principles developed in the undergraduate courses described above are also being disseminated to practicing teachers in the field through MSU's graduate reading offerings, through contract courses offered through Continuing Education, and through in-service workshops.

3. Secondary school student teachers are given experiences to develop the following competencies in reading instruction: Identification of the major elements of reading comprehension within their content areas; Assessment and profiling of specific reading skills of their students; Application of a directed reading sequence; Application of differentiated reading methods to individualize in heterogeneous groups; Determination of readability levels of materials; Application of language experience approaches; Application of motivational techniques.

   The strategy of this student-teaching reading component is to provide instruction and materials for student teaching consultants and supervisors who in turn assist student teachers to apply reading methods as they teach subject matter. As a service to host schools, invitations are extended to staff members to receive instruction and materials for use in in-service programs.

4. A three-week seminar following student teaching is provided for prospective secondary school teachers to extend the depth and range of methods developed in student teaching. Television tapes, audio tapes, peer teaching, and secondary classroom materials are used to provide simulation. This is a competency-based course.

5. A three-week experience, working directly with students in an individualized learning center, is provided as an elective for secondary school teaching candidates. The centers in Lansing were created by a staff member from the College of Education and serve as a laboratory for undergraduates who work under the close supervision of a university staff member.

6. Graduate experiences in secondary reading are also offered. Here the student must analyze the major components of secondary reading programs: curriculum, evaluation, reading and study skill methods, materials, problems of special groups. Methods of developing comprehensive programs that encompass reading instruction in content area classrooms and individualized learning centers are also included.

7. As a part of their field experiences, masters and doctoral candidates work with reading consultants employed by local and county districts to refine their skills in helping teachers improve reading instruction in classrooms, in operating individualized learning centers, and in coordinating a comprehensive program. Experiences are offered in elementary, secondary, college, and adult reading programs.

8. Graduate students, classroom teachers, and reading teachers work with a university staff member who is engaged in experimental research in the improvement of the reading comprehensions of students in middle schools through senior high schools. The major goal is acquisition of new information for better instruction. An additional outcome is the production of trained reading researchers.

9. Faculty members engage in reading program improvement through a contract arrangement in the Continuing Education Division. These courses are completely individualized in terms of the needs of the school system. Classroom teachers and/or reading consultants work with a university reading specialist to diagnose program needs and devise instructional strategies to improve the reading of students within the school system.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

Students preparing for elementary school teaching at Michigan State University are given a choice at the end of their sophomore year of either following the traditional on-campus program route or enrolling in the Elementary Intern Program (EIP) for their final two years of preparation. This Intern Program is conducted cooperatively by the university and 61 different public systems in this state.

The student choosing EIP attends a ten-week summer session at MSU between his sophomore and junior years. From September - March, he moves to an off-campus internship center. Elementary schoolteaching methods and student teaching are integrated during this six-month period. He returns to the campus for spring quarter and a five-week summer session which follows. During this time, he completes his work toward general education requirements and major and minor requirements in liberal arts areas.

During his fourth calendar year of study, the student becomes an intern teacher with a salary of approximately $5,000 per year with the responsibility for a classroom. During this year, he is supervised by the intern consultant who has as a full-time assignment working with about five or six interns. One evening a week is spent in classroom study and at the end of the year, the student qualifies for a bachelor's degree and a teaching certificate. The help provided for these beginning teachers is built into the program on a self-financing basis. Although intern teachers are not paid full salaries, the school system pays the same amount for their services as they would for a regularly certified beginning teacher. The salaries of the intern consultants are paid from the difference between the amount paid by the school district and the salary paid to each intern.

Since its inception, MSU has engaged in a continuous evaluation of its Internship Program through the use of systematic depth interviews of the students themselves

and of those working most closely with them. Some of the advantages which have been discovered in this approach to teacher preparation are as follows:

1. Educational theory and practice can be integrated much more easily. Methods courses are taught while students are spending part of their time in the environment of the public school and thus rich opportunities for the immediate transfer of formal instruction in pedagogy to work in the classroom is possible.

2. This program makes possible frequent evaluations of the student, using as the basis for decisions and retention in the program evidence of growth in the student's ability to work effectively with children.

3. EIP's major contribution has been its development of a new dimension in teacher preparation, the intern consultant position. Instead of expecting a beginning teacher to perform well all of the tasks undertaken by an experienced teacher, the EIP student receives continuing individualized guidance when he assumes responsibility for a classroom. His introduction to teaching thus, is gradual and carefully directed.

   The intern consultants, selected from among the most able teachers in the cooperating school districts, have developed in-service education of new teachers far beyond our initial expectation. The low ratio of interns to intern consultants and the closeness and continuity of the relationship over time has made it possible for very specific help to be offered and accepted. Most importantly, the consultants have helped "bridge the gap" between the college course work and the public school classroom by helping the intern to relate theory and practice.

In each center, a member of the university faculty serves as program director and is permanently based in the off-campus center. He acts as general program coordinator, teaches some of the elementary methods courses, coordinates the student teaching experiences, and supervises the work of the intern consultants. Campus-based faculty share the responsibility for the methods instruction. Cooperating local districts furnish all necessary physical facilities such as office and classroom space, including utilities.

Our experience over the past ten years causes us to be firmly committed to an intern-centered teacher preparation program. The active participation of public school staff members in certain phases of the program tends to guarantee a realism and practicality which may sometimes be lost as college professors work in isolation. At the present time, approximately 40 percent of our elementary education majors are enrolled in the EIP Program.

CLUSTER PROGRAM IN STUDENT TEACHING

Students spend 12 weeks in full-time student teaching in cooperating public school centers around the state. Instead of the normal one-to-one relationship between a student and a supervising teacher, the students are assigned to school buildings in clusters of 10-12 students per building. The school itself, and the community it serves, are used as a learning laboratory in which the student teachers study the problems of teaching and gain experience in solving these problems.

To guide the learning experiences of student teachers in this educational laboratory, an outstanding teacher from the instructional staff of that school is selected jointly by the faculty, school administration, and the university. This person is released half time (this time paid for by the university) to serve as a "clinical consultant" who helps plan for the optimum utilization of the resources of the school in developing an individualized professional experience program for each student teacher.

Each student's schedule includes, of course, a good deal of classroom teaching experience, but not necessarily under the supervision of a single teacher. For example, a student might be teaching three classes in social studies, but under the guidance of three different teachers. In addition, the student engages in an organized program designed especially for him to learn about the many facets of a teacher's job outside the formal classroom setting. Included are such things as: a) working with small groups or individuals in remedial tutoring situations; b) visiting homes of students and learning about community activities; c) learning about the administration of a school as viewed by the principal, attendance officer, custodian, or groundskeeper; d) learning about and working with social agencies influential in the community; and e) becoming familiar with the special services of the school (guidance, remedial reading, school nurse, library, audio-visual aids and the like).

Since sufficient support services to the clinical consultants is extremely important, a full-time university staff member is responsible for a region involving about eight to ten clusters. He is resident in the region and readily available to clinical consultants any time. His duties include the administration of the university program in the region including placement of students, liaison with schools in the area, handling special problems of students, etc. His most important function, however, is that of providing pre-service orientation and in-service training for clinical consultants. Continuous activities are provided to assist those working directly with the students to grow in their new role.

The clinical consultants working with the university staff are constantly alert to opportunities for cooperation between the university and the public schools. They provide the channel for dialogue between the campus and the school classroom.

Some of the advantages which we have discovered in a program structured in this manner over the conventional type of student teaching experience are as follows:

1. The more capable students are permitted, encouraged, and expected to reach higher levels of competency than is achieved in the usual

program where they often reach a plateau early in the student teaching period and continue through the experience without much additional challenge.

2. The less capable students are able to move at a pace more appropriate to their abilities, and while not achieving competency in all phases of teaching will reach a satisfactory level in the minimum program without the frustration of overexpectation.

3. More student teachers have a chance to be influenced by very outstanding teachers in the building. These master teachers can serve as models for several student teachers instead of restricting their contact to "their own" single student teacher.

4. There is higher morale among student teachers because of an increased opportunity to share common concerns with their peers and to assist each other with their problems.

5. Two research studies recently completed show the cluster program is significantly better in bringing changes in both attitudes and openness of student teachers. Another study confirms the fact that student teachers in cluster programs engaged in a much broader program of activities.

6. Pupils in the school have an increased opportunity for individual attention and individual instruction.

7. The greatly increased instructional resources available in the school building makes possible the release of regular teachers on occasion from their normal responsibilities. They thus can have time for planning, work on curriculum problems, and work with individual pupils or groups which would not be possible without the additional resources available to them.

8. The program allows for the university expenditure to be used much more efficiently and effectively. No longer must a faculty member spend many hours in his automobile traveling from school to school, but instead can spend his time where he can be most useful.

9. The involvement of public school practioners in the teacher training program has been most beneficial. This helps break down the isolation from the practical problems of classroom teachers which often develop in colleges and universities preparing teachers. Theory and practice are brought closer together and teacher education programs are kept more relevant to the needs of teachers.

PUBLIC SCHOOL EXPERIENCES FOR UNIVERSITY FACULTY MEMBERS

During the past three years, Michigan State University has made serious attempts to involve its College of Education faculty in significant teaching experiences in the public schools. We were particularly concerned that professional courses at the university level are often staffed by personnel who have not had recent experiences in inner-city classrooms.

Participants in Operation REFUEL (relevant experiences for urban educational leaders) serve on one of four instructional teams at the Allen Street School in Lansing, Michigan. Each team consists of two Lansing teachers, one MSU professor, one or two graduate interns, and two to four student teachers. Each is responsible for the instruction of approximately 50 elementary students. The MSU staff member is a team member half-time for 12 weeks. His role in the classroom is in the area of his specialty and involves active participation with children. Although his primary function is classroom instruction, an MSU professor may be asked to consult with members of other instructional teams in his specialty area.

Similar secondary school opportunities are offered to our faculty at Pattengill Junior High and Eastern High School in Lansing as a part of our TTT Project.

During the past three years, approximately 60 university faculty members have been engaged in the direct instruction of pupils in the public schools. The participating professors have indicated that their experience in the schools has helped them to improve their methods course teaching. It has helped each to freshen his memory regarding the day-to-day difficulties encountered in public school teaching. It has also helped him gain creditability among college students by his willingness to put his ideas "on the line" in a real classroom.

FOLLOW-UP PROGRAM FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS

Public schools are inadequately prepared to provide all of the necessary in-service aids for beginning teachers. Neither have the teacher training institutions placed a very high priority on the follow-up of beginning teachers as they move into their first years on the job.

Three years ago, discussions with school officials in Berrien County led to the development of a credit offering entitled Laboratory and Field Experiences - Instructional Strategies for Beginning Teachers, offered jointly by the three teacher training institutions actively involved in that county. The planning for this activity was done by public school officials and by representatives of the three institutions. Students were allowed to enroll to receive credit from any one of the universities cooperating in the program.

This has not been a graduate course in the normal sense in any respect. The course content has actually been determined by the students themselves and instruction has been organized around the problems thus identified. The resource persons have been selected from faculty members at the institutions or from public school personnel with particular competencies related to the identified problems.

The results of this program were evaluated so favorably by those involved that it was decided to extend the program to other MSU teacher education centers, in cooperation with other institutions if they were interested, or independently if other institutions were not available or interested. Thus, in 1970-71 the program was extended to nine centers around the state and in 1971-72 a second offering directed at experienced teachers was initiated at the request of the people in Berrien County.

The evaluations from the teachers involved in all of these programs has been uniformly high. The reports indicate that the morale of the teachers in their schools was markedly improved through this opportunity to share their problems with their peers, and to share with their peers, and with more experienced professionals, in attempts to solve these problems.

Recently, arrangements were completed with the Lansing School System to offer this kind of a program for the in-service development of teachers within a single system. Again, the in-service activities will be built around the problems identified by the teachers, and resources will be drawn from both the public school staff and the University. This is one more development in moving graduate programs out from the confines of the four walls of the college classroom into the environment of the public schools and structuring the study around the teacher's real concerns.

OVERSEAS STUDY OPPORTUNITIES IN EDUCATION FOR UNDERGRADUATES

Michigan State University plans overseas student teaching opportunities in various overseas locations. The format for the overseas programs calls for a group of 20-25 student teachers to teach in an American overseas school (classes conducted in English) for approximately six or seven weeks. The remaining five or six weeks of a school term are spent in a Michigan student teaching center assignment.

The groups who travel overseas are accompanied by a regular MSU faculty member from the student teaching staff who serves as a coordinator of the program, both in the overseas setting and in the Michigan center. The student teachers live with families in the "host" community, taking advantage of the opportunity to study and participate in a second culture. The American schools cooperating in this program are located in The Hague, Guatemala City, Madrid, Rome, and London.

COMPETENCY-BASED COURSE WORK ON THE TASKS OF TEACHING

The first course required of all prospective teachers at Michigan State University is focused upon the tasks demanded of a teacher in optimizing student learning. Part of the instruction is offered through student learning carrels with the rest of the course focusing upon the prospective teacher as a person and upon his self-learning, self-development, and personal growth.

The personal demands of teaching are dealt with in small groups of 15 or less which meet twice a week to interact about individual and group experiences. The demand is for flexibility, self-direction, openness, ability to take risks, and examination of one's own biases and strengths. As the student gains greater self understanding, as he examines his own beliefs and value system, he is asked to relate these personal attributes to the role of a teacher and how they may affect him in this role.

In the individual study carrels, the focus is upon the growth of others. Here, simulated materials are used and the process is to first give information about others to students combined with directions concerning how this information should be used. Subsequently, experience in using the information to make decisions and perform tasks that teachers perform as they help others grow becomes the goal.

Specific behavioral objectives for each unit accompany the written instructional materials used in the course. The Carrel Room experience offers the maximum freedom to the student that is compatible with mastery of the important concepts of the teaching-tasks model. Coordinated written materials and audio-visuals present these concepts in a logical sequence. The student may choose his own time for coming to the Carrel Room, may view as many or as few programs as he chooses, may repeat programs at will. The student takes the responsibility for making the most useful combination of these resources to facilitate his own learning. Mastery tests for each unit allow the student to demonstrate his competency with the unit's concepts before proceeding to the next unit. If performance objectives are not achieved on the first testing, instructors help each student design and carry out a re-instruction plan.

Basically, there is only one requirement for a student in the course - that is, that he "master" the course objectives. Mastery is considered a successful performance of the behavioral objectives specified for the personal and task demands of teaching. Thus, the student can show mastery of the personal demands of teaching when he demonstrates the listening, interpretive, interactive, and self-awareness skills described in the objectives. He shows mastery of the task demands of teaching, when he can demonstrate the ability to properly assess, write objectives, and plan strategies at a specified level of competence. Grading for the course is entirely on a pass/no credit system.

DEVELOPMENT OF SINGLE CONCEPT FILMS

Michigan State University is developing a series of five-minute, single-concept films each illustrating a concept in educational psychology which has relevance for teacher education. These concept films utilize an episode of classroom interaction illustrating the concept and demonstrating each of its critical attributes. These films are produced on 16mm black and white film with natural classroom sound and are later reduced to a super-8mm cartridge for use in a continuous film loop projector.

The films are prepared to be used with an accompanying film guide in the self-instructional carrel setting and are used as students study the tasks of teaching. The films and the film guides were field tested during fall term, 1971, and results are presently being evaluated. A preliminary analysis, however, indicates that the use of these single-concept films and guides is an effective means of not only acquiring an initial understanding of the concept, but being able to transfer this knowledge and correctly applying it to a simulated classroom situation.

TEACHER PREPARATION FOR INNER-CITY SCHOOLS

Ideally, every student would be willing to make a commitment to help in the solution of some of the problems of education in the inner-city without regard to the personal dislocation involved. Practically, we know this is not true. Therefore, we try to provide a program which will fit the degree of commitment each student is willing to make.

For those students having a high level of commitment to inner-city teaching, we have a program which involves the student for nearly two years of the four-year program in work in the inner-city schools of Flint. Course work in pedagogy is offered there in the environment of the public schools. A very carefully guided year of internship is a part of this involvement.

For those students who are unwilling to absent themselves from the campus for more than a year, we offer a program which provides for a six-month experience in inner-city schools in Detroit, at which time learning theory is carefully integrated with supervised practice and with enriched resources for teaching in inner-city schools.

We also offer a special master's degree program with emphasis on the problems of urban education. The program is one that is geared specifically to the problems encountered in the schools by inner-city teachers.

CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE BEFORE ADMISSION TO TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Careful selection of those allowed to enter a teacher preparation program is probably one of the most important factors determining the quality of the graduates of such a program. The College of Education at Michigan State University has now initiated a new selection procedure prior to admission to teacher education. Probably the most important criterion used in this selection process is demonstrated ability, on the part of the applicant, to work effectively with children.

Prior to admission to the program, each student is required to spend a minimum of 60 hours in a public school classroom serving as a teacher's aide. During this time, the university representatives and public school teachers have an opportunity to observe a prospective teacher's ability to relate to youngsters. An evaluation of his personal qualities in relation to the expectations of the teacher role is made by both the public school teacher with whom the student has worked and the university representative who has observed him as a teacher aide. These evaluations are extremely important as the applicant's admission request is reviewed.

A POST-STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE FOR ALL UNDERGRADUATES

A required course for all undergraduates in the College of Education follows their student teaching experience. The course is divided into three-week and one-week modules and the student may select from approximately 30 different topics those offerings he feels will be most helpful to him. This makes it possible for the student to receive additional preparation in those areas in which he experienced difficulty during student teaching.

All students are required to enroll in a module on Social Foundations of Education to meet Michigan Certification Code requirements. However, for the rest of the course he may structure his study around those topics which he feels will best fit his individual needs. He may choose from such topics as: Classroom management; Methods of teaching in his area of specialty; Reading problems of secondary school student; Drug abuse; School finance; Instructional materials; Special problems of urban area teachers; Professional organizations; Job placement; Differentiated staffing; Performance contracting; Open classrooms; etc.

Each of these modules is taught by a specialist in the area. Most instruction is given by College of Education faculty members in groups of 30 or less. For some topics, however, specialists are selected from among other faculty members around the University or from among public school personnel.

REVISED ENGLISH DEPARTMENT PROGRAM FOR TEACHERS

The English Department over four years has developed a completely new Secondary English Education program for high-school, middle-school, and junior high school English teachers which stresses the teaching and learning of writing (English 214), the development of appropriate reading and writing materials for the adolescent classroom (English 301), and the teaching and learning of reading (English 408).

This program involves extensive field experience work, each student participating in a full year of classroom field experience (one day a week) before and in addition to student teaching. English 408 (The Teaching and Learning of Reading for Secondary English Teachers) is the only course in reading taught by any major English department in the country, and one of the few pre-service secondary reading courses taught anywhere. The English Department has also revised its courses in writing and in language study for Elementary Education majors at Michigan State University (English 213 and English 301).

The English Department's extensive field work program was prioneered in cooperation with the Lansing School System, and throughout the program revision the English Department has enjoyed the active help and cooperation of Secondary and Elementary Education at Michigan State University and of such nearby school systems as the East Lansing, Okemos, and Mason School Systems.

NEW PROGRAM FOR TEACHERS OF SPEECH

The preparation program for Communication (Speech) teachers at Michigan State University provides for extensive experiences in the schools. They include:

1. A minimum of 60 contact hours of observing and assisting a classroom teacher prior to taking the teaching methods course.

2. In the teaching methods course, each student must present his final practice lesson in a public school classroom (two days in each class).

3. Intern teaching as an undergraduate teaching assistant in one of the basic courses in the Department of Communication.

4. Each COM-ED major now satisfies his requirement of competency in forensics by working with college and/or secondary school debators, orators, etc.

SPECIAL SERVICES FOR TEACHERS OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

The Instructional Materials Center for Handicapped Children and Youth operates within the College of Education as a project largely supported financially by the United States Office of Education. The contract calls for services focused on the needs of teachers and the departments of education in three states: Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. (The center operates in coordination with a national network of instructional materials and resource centers.) The emphasis of the center has become largely a matter of in-service education for those teachers who relate to handicapped children. The major modes of delivery are three:

One mode is concerned exclusively with providing in-service training for a growing corps of in-service educators (staffed by the Department of Education). In this function, the IMC/HCY provides training and resource kits for these in-service educators. The center thus operates on a "multiplier effect" basis; the efforts of the university are multiplied through careful articulation with those crucial change agents within the public school systems.

The second mode of service to the quality of teaching in Michigan concerns the providing of a resource center and a stimulus for the establishment of coordinated associated centers in various districts. What improvement of teaching that has occurred in the past decade has largely been achieved through the effective use of more powerful instructional materials. The IMC/HCY constitutes a focal point in support of the Michigan Department of Education in its efforts to stimulate more excellent teaching.

The third mode of impact on teachers of the State of Michigan is provided through a question-and-answer service. Professional questions may be addressed to a computer-based retrieval system at Michigan State University. The inquiries to this system raise a virtually infinite variety of questions concerning problems of understanding and teaching children with given characteristics. A sizable bank of information is made available selectively in response to these questions. This information system is coordinated with the national system (Project ERIC).